



St Machar Academy

BULLETIN – TERM 2 SESSION 2007-2008



Dean Lawson's Christmas card design for St Machar Academy

Mrs Jan McRuvie

You may already be aware of the very sad news that Mrs Jan McRuvie, Principal Teacher of Guidance, has died suddenly after a short battle with cancer.

Mrs McRuvie was an excellent guidance teacher who always had the best interest of her pupils at heart. She was a very caring person and was a valued member of our guidance team. Her passing leaves a huge gap in our school.

Pupils and staff have signed a Book of Condolence which we hope will be of some help to Mrs McRuvie's family as they come to terms with their loss.

I am sure Mrs McRuvie's family will be in our thoughts and prayers.

First Class Designs

Congratulations to Jillian Bruce 5B for achieving Second prize in the Scottish Technical Teacher's Craft Competition. Jillian received £150 in prize money for her model of the 'drum' chair, which she produced for Standard Grade Craft and Design.

Alex Tawns of S5 won a competition to design a Christmas card for Frank Doran M.P. The theme was social justice. Alex's design has been reproduced professionally and will be seen by everyone on Mr Doran's official Christmas card list. Congratulations to Alex and to the other pupils who also took part and who also submitted very high quality entries.



Alex's winning design

The St Machar Academy Christmas card this year is based on a design by sixth year pupil Dean Lawson, the cards have been produced 'in house' by the Art and Design department to a very high standard and I am delighted once again to showcase the talent we have in St Machar Academy. The art work for the card is featured on the cover of this bulletin.

The Art & Design department has also produced a beautiful desk calendar for 2008 featuring work by classes 1J, 2C, 2I, 2F, S3 and Jemma Daley, Emmanuel Banda, Dean Lawson, Michelle Dawson, Craig Donaldson, Sophie Myatt and Sarah Taylor.



These coloured desk calendars are on sale price £1.00 and will be available into January.



Some of the artwork featured in the St Machar 2008 calendar.

Outward Bound Challenge and Adventure Course

During the first 2 weeks of October almost 150 of our S3 pupils took part in this course at Loch Eil near Fort William. Each 5-day course offered pupils the chance to enjoy and experience a wide variety of activities including raft building, hill walking, rock climbing, abseiling, gorge walking and canoeing.



S3 pupils take to the water at Loch Eil

The Outward Bound courses are part of our work towards meeting the aims of our School of Ambition programme and we believe that by participating in the Adventure and Challenge course pupils can experience a very different and challenging learning environment and their confidence and self-esteem will improve along with their ability to work as part of a team. The following are the thoughts of two of the pupils who took part:

“The best bit about the week was getting to try all sorts of exciting activities that we wouldn’t normally get a chance to do.”

“The thing we learnt most during the week was how well we could all work together in a team and we all overcame fears and took part in activities that we never thought we could do.”

German Play

On Friday 2 November St Machar Academy hosted a German Play entitled *Meine neue Schwester* by the Onattie Theatre Company. The play was attended by Torry, Hazlehead, Aberdeen Grammar School and Bankhead Academy and was enjoyed by all.

Seatbelt Awareness – Grampian Fire Service

In October all S4 pupils took part in an awareness-raising event on general road safety and the importance of seatbelts in particular.

The pupils also were involved in designing a new campaign for the Grampian Fire Service. The Fire Service was delighted with the ideas raised and is still considering various ideas from the pupils. Pupil evaluation was very positive and many have learned an important lesson on road safety.



Senior students discuss road safety issues.

S3 Citizenship Group

The 3rd year Citizenship Group has had a very busy term completing their Youth Achievement Award. The pupils set themselves four challenges in order to gain their Bronze awards. The challenges included setting up a recycling system in school and taking part in various Outdoor pursuits – both at Loch Eil and in Aberdeen, learning new skills and team work along the way. The group also managed to secure funding to buy themselves a digital camera in order to record all their achievements.

The Citizenship Group is a pilot scheme in St Machar Academy and Karen Brown, a local Community Learning Officer, has supported the group. The group are now working towards their Silver award and are planning to clear an area of wasteland within the school and replant the area. Watch out for the daffodils they planted near the main entrance to the school!

Columba 1400

On Sunday 4 November 13 S3 pupils and 3 members of staff travelled to Staffin on the North East coast of Skye to take part in the Columba 1400 Ambassadors Leadership Academy.

This week long course focused on the Columban Code of Responsible Leadership - awareness, focus, creativity, integrity, perseverance and service. It was a busy week with long days and extremely challenging activities – both mental and physical – but it had a huge impact on everyone who took part and the following quote from one of the pupils sums up the Columban effect.



Staff and pupils in Skye

“After experiencing Columba my thoughts on leadership have totally changed. Not only is it leading a group of people, it’s being part of that group of people. It means to me to respect, appreciate and to learn about yourself and others. It’s opened my eyes to so many different perspectives and now I look at things in a lot more depth. My focus has improved by far and I now appreciate all the small things that I have. I’m more determined, respectful and I’m so glad I was chosen to come here.”

Enterprise Event for Primary 7 Pupils

On Thursday 15 November, P7 pupils from our associated primary schools attended an action packed event at St Machar Academy

as part of Enterprise in Education Week. The wide range of fun activities included marketing, design, sales, communication and team building workshops. Sandra Gates, Development Officer, organised the event and our thanks are due to her.

One of our former pupils Gordon Middler, Managing Director of 'the Music Club' an ambitious venture which is soon to be launched in the city centre, gave up his time to help with the conference. Councillor Kirsty West also paid a visit to the event.

This is the first of a number of events to help in the transition process between primary and secondary school. As a school we work closely with all our primary schools and in May there will be a joint project through our School of Ambition work.

1001 Inventions

As a reward for outstanding effort and attitude in Science, 36 pupils and 4 members of staff attended "1001 Inventions Muslim Heritage In Our World Exhibition" on 6 December at Glasgow Science Centre. The exhibition covered 7 areas relating to our everyday lives: Home, School, Hospital, Market, Town, World and Universe. The exhibition gave our pupils an insight into the considerable and significant contribution of Science and Technology within Muslim civilisation.



In addition to the exhibition the group also attended workshops on "Climate Change" and "Blood, Bile and Body Bits".

The excellent behaviour of our pupils was commented on and although this was a very long day it was a very worthwhile experience for our pupils.

Pupils enjoy the exhibition at Glasgow Science Centre

Senior pupil involvement in the Diced Cap Appeal

A group of very committed senior pupils led by Mr Robertson of the Modern Studies Department is working to raise money as part of the Diced Cap appeal for their chosen charity Aberdeen Safer Cities Partnership. On 22 November they hosted an event 'You the Jury' in our School Hall. Senior pupils took the roles of the jury and the defendants/witnesses in a scripted court case about the supply of drugs. Local solicitor George Mathers was the judge and Matthew Finnie of Finnie's the Jeweller was the Clerk of the Court.

The play written by Gordon Townson highlighted in a very powerful way the effect of drugs on young people's lives and was also a chilling reminder of how far reaching the powers of our courts are. Various local companies sponsored the event and a substantial amount was raised for the charity. Our thanks to everyone involved in the event.

Senior Citizens Christmas Party

On 12 December we welcomed approximately 120 pensioners to St Machar Academy for a Christmas party. The event was organised jointly by the Enterprise group and the SFL department over a period of time. A lot of effort goes in to events like these but it is so heartening at a time when some young people get a bad press to see how well our pupils look after our Senior Citizens. The party is always much enjoyed by everyone.



Santa's visit to St Machar Academy to greet the senior citizens.

Christmas Services

The Christmas Services this year will once again be in St Machar's Cathedral on Thursday 20 December. Our Music department will be heavily involved and Rev. Dr. A Falconer and Rev. J Davies will be leading the services.

Rewards' Assemblies

Friday 21 December sees our Rewards' Assemblies for pupils who have attended well, behaved well and kept good punctuality. Names of pupils who have commendation awards are put into a draw and pupils can win cinema vouchers. Later in the session once pupils have reached Gold or Silver they are rewarded again.

Uniform

Please could you help us maintain a very good standard of uniform at St Machar Academy. Ties and Blazers, **white** polo shirts or blouses, black trousers or skirts are essential. Any sweatshirt worn must be black without logos etc.

Any help you could give us with regards to uniform would be most welcome.

S4 Exam Preparation

In February all S4 pupils will be involved in a morning looking at preparing for their SQA exams. The pupils will be involved in a variety of activities including revision activities that fit their individual learning styles, target setting, references and interviews.

It is hoped that this will allow pupils to focus on their final exams and to realise the importance of their results for their futures. It is vitally important that all pupils achieve what they are capable of and leave St Machar Academy as successful as they can be. All the activities will be delivered using the skills of a variety of teachers within the school and we would ask you to support your son/daughter, and the school, in focusing on their exams at this time of year.

Eco School Group

A group of S2 pupils and staff are working towards making St Machar Academy a more eco-friendly environment. As part of this

project, the Eco-School group has chosen to concentrate on two areas: Energy and Waste Minimisation.

A poster competition will be run amongst S2 pupils to encourage staff to switch off classroom lights when not in use. The winning designs will be distributed throughout the school. Pupils are also trying to raise awareness about minimising electricity usage e.g. switching off computer monitors rather than using screensavers.

Paper recycling currently takes place in the school and has been very successful so far. The Eco-School group plan to implement plastic bottle and can recycling next term. It is hoped that recycling facilities will reduce the litter in and around the school.

Next term, the school will take part in the Rag-Bag recycling scheme where unwanted textiles are recycled to raise funds for the school. Every pupil will be issued with a recycling bag after Christmas to be brought back on Tuesday 22 January for the scheduled collection. Start saving your unwanted clothes, shoes, bags, hats, belts, towels, curtains, and bed linen etc. now!

To increase energy awareness in the school and the home we have arranged for 1000 Powerdown plugs and 2000 energy saving light bulbs to be delivered free to the school towards the end of January.



A Powerdown plug, when used on a PC, automatically switches off any equipment linked to your computer such as printers, scanners and monitors when you shut down – a simple way to cut your overnight electricity consumption and your carbon emissions. As long as we can issue 75% of the Powerdowns and energy saving bulbs to households through our pupils, we can have 25% for the school to help us reduce our energy costs.

Energy Facts

- A PC switched on 24/7 costs £60 per year to run.
- A PC switched off at night and at weekends costs £15 per year to run.
- Monitors use twice as much energy as PCs.
- Printers are normally switched on all day, but only used for part of the time.
- St Machar Academy spends £102 per pupil on energy per year.

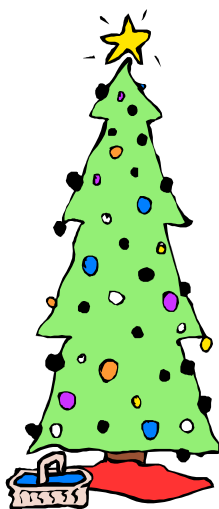
Please look out for the Powerdowns during February and help yourself and the school save energy.

Assembly Hall

Our Assembly Hall is now back to full working order after a considerable time out of commission. Some very expensive work has had to be undertaken to meet Health and Safety requirements but now that the work is completed our theatre licence is imminent.

Important dates for Term 3

Monday 7 January 2008	New Term Begins
Monday 18 February 2008	Mid Term Holiday
Tuesday 19 February 2008	In-service day
Thursday 20 March 2008	Term Ends
Friday 21 March – Friday 4 April 2008	Easter Holidays
Monday 7 April 2008	New Term Begins



And finally, can we wish you all
a peaceful Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.